

MINUTES
MARION CITY COUNCIL REGULAR MEETING
CONFERENCE CALL / SHANNON WILKERSON GYM
TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 10, 2020 AT 6:30 P.M.

MAYOR/COUNCILMEMBERS PRESENT:

Mayor Ashley Brady

Councilwoman Tassie Lewis

Councilman Ralph Atkinson

Councilman Michael Baker

Councilman Joseph Frazier

Councilman Ronald Atkinson

Mayor Pro Tem Emerson Hunt

STAFF PRESENT:

Alan Ammons, City Administrator

Ainsley Sanders, City Clerk

Patricia Brown, City Treasurer

James Brogdon, City Attorney

Keith Parks, Chief of Police

1. MEETING CALLED TO ORDER – MAYOR ASHLEY BRADY

Meeting was called to order by Mayor Ashley Brady.

2. PRAYER/PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Mayor Ashley Brady led pledge and prayer.

3. WELCOME CITIZENS, GUESTS & PRESS – MAYOR ASHLEY BRADY

Mayor Ashley Brady welcomed all guest.

4. APPROVE MINUTES –

- Regular Meeting October 13, 2020
- Special Meeting October 28, 2020

A motion was made by Councilman Michael Baker, seconded by Councilman Joseph Frazier to approve our Regular scheduled meeting on October 13, 2020, and Special Meeting on October 28, 2020. The motion carried.

5. OCTOBER EMPLOYEE OF THE MONTH – MAYOR ASHLEY BRADY

Mayor Ashley Brady stated that it is always a great pleasure to recognize our employee of the month and this month he stated that he is going to pull one on us. We don't just have one employee of the month we have three employee of the month. We have Vondell Roberts, Zay Smith, Willie Reed. These young men a couple of weeks ago helped out when we were in a bind. We got our new trash truck and we needed somebody, that for one drive the trash truck, and two young men work on the back of it. So Mr. Vondell who has been with the City of Marion for a couple of years, has a CDL license, he was our driver, and Zay and Willie was working on the back. Mayor Ashley Brady appreciates everything they do because when they signed up they did not sign up to be trash men on the back of a truck. Certificates were presented. Mayor Ashley Brady thanked them for what they do.

6. BID FOR RFP – SOLID WASTE COLLECTION

Mayor Ashley Brady stated as everyone knows we put out for bids this morning on our RFP trash services for the City of Marion. We had four to show up for our bid opening. We have not had the chance to get all the details on it, because there is a lot of details that we need to look out for.

We had three bids and each one has a packet in front of you. We had one firm to not bid. His suggestion is we need to be able to sit down with our Attorney Mr. Brogdon to dwell into the contracts a little more. We just didn't have enough time today to look through it all. So what he would like to do is suggest that we have a Special Meeting for next Wednesday the 18th at 5:30 p.m. that would give us time to prepare and make sure we get the best deal for the City of Marion's trash deal. If possible he would like to defer any action on the trash collection to next week's Special Meeting at 5:30 p.m. ***A motion was made by Mayor Pro Tem Emerson Hunt, seconded by Councilman Ronald Atkinson.*** A brief discussion went on tape. Mayor stated let's do it the 17th at 5:30 p.m. Mayor stated he knows we have some vendors here but they are welcome to come to that meeting as well. It's just a lot of information to digest.

7. COMMUNITY FACILITY GRANT RESOLUTION

Mayor Ashley Brady stated several months ago we approved the application for \$50,000.00 grant from USDA to get our new Grapper truck (2nd Grapper truck). Well we got awarded \$ 50,000.00 grant we just need a motion to accept USDA grant for \$50,000.00. ***A motion was made by Mayor Pro Tem Emerson Hunt, Councilman Michael Baker seconded the motion.*** The motion carried.

8. STATE CONTRACT BID ON GRAPPLE TRUCK

Mayor Ashley Brady stated that this would be our 2nd Grapper truck it will be used for our Public Works department. (It's an item attachment in the

packet.) The 2nd Grapper truck is very similar to the one we have now for picking up C & D yard debris. The State contract bid on that truck is \$150,441.03. We just approved of accepting the \$50,000.00 grant, and approved in our budget \$25,000.00 out our hospitality, the remaining funds we got some auction funds from selling our track hoe. Sold some property to DOT for the roundabout, auction funds. When it's all said and done we are probably going to be short about \$12,000.00. With what we squared away with selling different stuff. So basically we are going to get a \$151,000.00 truck that's going to cost us \$12,000.00. If agreeable he would like to get a motion to approve the purchase of a 2nd Grapper truck for \$150,441.03. ***A motion was made by Councilman Ralph Atkinson, seconded by Councilman Joseph Frazier to approve the purchase of \$150,441.03 knowing that we will have about \$12,000.00 that will fall short we will have to make arrangement to cover that and he suggest we maybe think about taking that out the reserve account (fund balance) until we can pay that back.*** The motion carried.

9. **DIGITAL SIGN – SOUTH MAIN STREET**

Mayor Ashley Brady stated several months ago when we did our budget for hospitality; we approved the digital sign for Bobby Gerald Parkway, and about two weeks ago that sign went live. I hope everyone had the opportunity to see it. It looks great. We can program it from the office; with wifi, we can program it in a flash. We can put on there the events going to end at 5:00, it rotates and comes off at 5:00. So we are not having a lot of old stuff. You program it and it will start it and when you want to stop it. So

when we did that we budgeted \$35,000.00 for that sign on Bobby Gerald Pkwy. We came in at \$28,000.00 leaving us \$7,000.00 surplus on that budgeted item. The sign company came back and said hey we got a sale going on. Instead of it costing \$28,000.00 you can get a new sign for \$24,627.00. So we got a \$7,000.00 surplus. So we're short about \$17,627.00 in order to get a sign for South Main Street across from Police Department. In our hospitality budget, we had budgeted \$20,000.00 for sidewalks, fencing at Green Street. Well we are still waiting on the Capital Sales Tax money to come in so we can start our construction, and that was our project. The new ball fields and fixing the Pepsi building so it really wouldn't make much sense for us to do sidewalk, fencing before we get the building and grounds finished. So the Mayor's proposal would be to transfer \$20,000.00 that we had budgeted for sidewalks and fencing to pay for the 2nd sign on South Main street. It doesn't cost us a dime and we still end up \$2,372.00 left in hospitality budget for sidewalk etc. ***A motion was made by Councilman Ralph Atkinson, seconded by Councilman Joseph Frazier to approve to purchase an additional digital sign at reduced price and transfer \$ 20,000.00, along with the other savings to take care the purchase of the sign and let Mayor Ashley Brady and Administrator move forward.*** The motion carried.

10. REQUEST TO ADDRESS COUNCIL – MARILYN T. WOODBERRY

Mrs. Woodberry started by saying she love Marion if she didn't she would not have stayed here for over 64 years but sometimes she is disturbed by things that go on in our City. James Baldwin said not everything that is

faced can be changed but nothing can be changed until it is faced, and that is why she is here tonight. I do not understand why the Marion Police Department, the one's on duty and volunteer's only patrol certain areas of the City on Halloween. Halloween is for all citizens in the City not for just a select few. I listened to the last City Council meeting through zoom and never heard one thing about all the Policemen would only be in one area to ensure the Citizen's had a safe Halloween while crossing the Streets. What she heard the Mayor say was if you do not want to take part then turn off your light from six to eight. Am I wrong? As I left the Church, Bethlehem Baptist Church on Godbold Street going down Jones Ave, and approached Main Street all she saw was all them flashing lights. Well her thought was something terrible must of happen then she saw all those people sitting in there yards and trick or treaters walking down the sidewalks. She first approached the officers directly in front of Food Lion. A light skin officers she didn't know his name said "What can I do for you lady?" I asked why are all these Policeman in the white neighborhood and not any in the black neighborhoods. He said we are helping out with traffic. Is that what you stopped here to say to me? I said I didn't stop to make a statement. I asked you a question there is a difference. She next stopped and talked with a kind Officer at the corner of Main and Jones Avenue. She asked the same question. He stated he was just doing what he was told to do. The Chief was standing right across the Street and spoke to the Chief who gave this long drawn out excuse as to the reason they were there. She said to him do not try to fast talk me. I did not need for you to go all the way to Florence and come back. I just asked you a simple question. He then said it was a

City thing and the event planner was in charge of what was happening and that if I was having an event and wanted the Police to be present I should have went through the event planner. He stated if there was an emergency people could call 911 and they would send somebody. I said so let me understand what you just said to me. The City is responsible for all Police being in this area and that it's ok for the children in the black neighborhood who are trick or treating to cross and get hit by a car. I also stated that I had been at Bethlehem Baptist Church which is a main road since 2:30 and until that present time and had not seen one Police Officer pass down that area. He said that was my opinion. I said that was not my opinion but a fact because I know what my eyes saw. I was not pleased with the response given to me by your new Police Chief so I called two of the Councilmen to see why the Police were only patrolling certain areas and they did not have a clue as to what I was talking about. I said all that to say this Maya Angelou said do the very best that you can until you know better, then when you know better do better. I want to chop this all up and say the Police Chief didn't know any better. He did not know he should have been looking out for all citizens in the City of Marion. So here I am so that this will never happen again. Thank you for your time and May God bless you and I hope that as representatives of the City of Marion you will see that this does not happen again.

Mayor Ashley Brady thanked Mrs. Woodberry for her comments and he appreciated it, and stated that we do look out for all citizens everybody and make sure all our children are safe at every event we have. We really do appreciate your comments, but we look out for all the citizens all over the

entire town and he is sorry, but we look out for everybody and make sure all our children are safe.

11. ADMINISTRATOR'S REPORT

Report on City facilities (Covid-19)

Mr. Ammons stated that he just have one thing he wanted to bring up and report back to Council, and that was several months ago we came up with an opening plan and we did that with our facilities. Mr. Ammons want to report back that we have had no issues with the virus and he would recommend that we stay in the same mode that we are in right now with just the one rental per week. Not reopening anything else right now.

12. CITY ATTORNEY'S LEGAL UPDATE

Attorney did not have anything at the time.

13. DISTRICT AND CITY UPDATE FROM COUNCIL AND MAYOR

Mayor Ashley Brady: Mayor Ashely Brady stated that they have finished the paving on Huggins Street. We will be going to the Transportation Committee to work on another project shortly. We wish we could pave all the streets but SCDOT are responsible for paving the streets.

The edging have been completed on South and North Main Street and are working today on Liberty Street.

Saturday we had Covid testing here in the C D Joyner parking lot and conducted 36 covid-19 test here in the parking lot and are going to come

back on November 28 and do a drive thru service for covid-19 testing as well. We will have that on our new digital billboard sign. We will get in touch with our sign vendor and get that sign in place. Mayor Ashley Brady stated that he is not sure how long it will take to come in. Last time it took a couple months, but we will see if we can get it done prior to Christmas and leading up to Christmas.

We won't have another City Council meeting prior to our Christmas program we normally have. We are going to have our Tree Lighting this year and it will scaled back dramatically, scaled back program; Opening comments, Minister-Opening Prayer, Comments, Benediction, Tree Lighting. We are encouraging social distancing, and mask.

We will have hand sanitizer stations available, but I think we need to have some normalcy in our City and the Tree Lighting is a well-attended event. He don't think it will be as large as it has been because of the covid-19, and we understand that. Then we will have the fireworks show afterwards. That can be social distance because most people stay in their cars, and that's the game plan on that. It will be the first Sunday December the 6th. We will start working on Christmas decorations here in the next week getting our decorations ready.

We had a reminder in your packets that tomorrow is Veterans Day and Mayor Ashley Brady wants to thank all Veteran's that have served and are in the room. Thank you for your services, and the ones that aren't here we always appreciate what men and women have done for our country, protecting us and the sacrifices that he or she has made while deployed.

City offices will be closed tomorrow for Veteran's Day. We had planned for a Veteran's Day program drive thru program for our Veterans. We didn't want to have our traditional because most of our Veterans are at risk being older Veteran's. So instead of having traditional Veteran's Day ceremony we was going to do a drive thru, but it's supposed to be 100% rain Thursday at 4:00 so we moved Veteran's Day program until Monday at 4:00 here. We encourage you to come spread the word. We will get it out on social media, on our signage and make that change.

Councilman Michael Baker: Councilman Michael Baker don't have anything.

Councilman Joseph Frazier: Councilman Joseph Frazier stated that the Chamber of Commerce sent out the invitation's for the parade right? Mayor Ashley Brady responded yes that they work on parade. Councilman Frazier said last year he didn't get one and he doesn't know what happened. Mr. Ammons stated that he would check on that for him. Mayor Ashley Brady stated that the parade will be that Sunday. Historically our parade starts at the museum and run down Main Street. Well this year the Chamber decided that they are going to start here and let it run South of Main Street and that way the Fire Truck and Santa will roll right into his spot and step off and all the children are right there. It's just majestic. Here comes Santa Clause riding on a fire truck, and just before the tree lighting.

Councilman Ronald Atkinson: Councilman Ronald Atkinson stated that he do not have anything.

Councilman Ralph Atkinson: Councilman Ralph Atkinson stated that he didn't have anything.

Councilwoman Tassie Lewis: Councilwoman Tassie Lewis stated we are still going to have our annual Coat Drive. The theme is Rise Above It All and with Christ on our side we can rise above it all. We are going to have it on the 25th at Grice's field. No one will be allowed out of their cars. We will service them and they will let us know what size and sex of the child, and go forth at that point. We will put the sizes on the table. We want to give back to the community being that this is the 25th Wednesday that will be the day before we part things for the holiday from 2:00p.m. to 4p.m. the day before Thanksgiving..

Mayor Ashley Brady thanks Councilwoman for what she does.

Councilwoman stated that we are looking for support from all of you, and all are welcome to buy a coat any size and any price and we appreciate all you do.

Mayor Pro Tem Emerson Hunt: Mayor Pro Tem Emerson Hunt just wanted to remind everyone that in this stressful time in the world everybody try to take care of themselves, try to be healthy as possible. I know it's a lot of illness. Covid-19 is causing a lot of stress, and a lot of problems. His biggest

prayer is everyone take care of themselves, and do the best that they can in this stressful time.

14. EXECUTIVE SESSION

- Legal Advice – City Attorney
- Personnel Matter – Recreation Department

A motion was made by Mayor Pro Tem Emerson Hunt, seconded by Councilman Michael Baker and Councilman Ronald Atkinson to go into Executive Session to discuss Attorney Legal Advice, and Personnel Matter-Recreation Department.

A motion was made to come out of Executive Session by Mayor Pro Tem Emerson Hunt, seconded by Councilman Michael Baker to come out of Executive Session. The motion carries.

15. POSSIBLE ACTION ON EXECUTIVE SESSION ITEMS

Mayor Ashley Brady stated that no action was taken in Executive Session.

16. ADJOURNMENT

A motion was made by Councilman Ralph Atkinson, seconded by Councilman Joseph Frazier. The motion carried.

Mayor Ashley Brady

Ainsley Sanders, City Clerk
Taped: November 10, 2020